

REMARKS

This paper is submitted responsive to the Official Action mailed June 27, 2003. Reconsideration of the application in light of the accompanying remarks and amendments is respectfully requested.

In the aforesaid action, the Examiner rejected all claims except claim 19 based upon various prior art references, and indicated that claim 19 contained patentable subject matter.

By the present amendment, independent claim 13 has been amended so as to include the subject matter of dependent claim 17 drawn to the peripheral groove in the sealing elements. In addition, new independent claim 27 has been presented which corresponds to currently amended claim 13, but including the subject matter of dependent claim 15 drawn to the releasable attachment of sealing element to sheet material. It is respectfully submitted that each of these claims is in condition for allowance.

As to claim 13 as amended, this claim contains the subject matter of previous dependent claim 17. This claim had been rejected by the Examiner solely on the basis of US Patent Number 4,599,314 to Shami (hereafter "Shami"). Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested. Shami shows skirt 42, but this does not define a peripheral groove as called for by claim 13 as amended. A groove is delimited between two sides or sidewalls and no such structure is present in Shami. Rather, Shami shows a stepped surface. The groove set forth in claim 13 is advantageous, furthermore, as set forth in the present specification at page 3, line 24 through page 4, line 8, and also at page 7, lines 15-30, for example.

Based upon the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that claim 13 is allowable over the art of record. Since this claim contains the subject matter of former dependent claim 17, which was rejected only over Shami, it is believed that no further discussion of the art of record is in order. Nevertheless,

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this art has been reviewed and it is submitted that the subject matter of claim 13 is neither disclosed nor suggested by any of the art of record.

Dependent claims 14-16 and 18-26 all depend directly or indirectly from independent claim 13 and are submitted to be patentable based upon this dependence. Each of these claims is further submitted to contain patentable subject matter in its own right. For example, dependent claim 19 has been indicated allowable by the Examiner. Further, new dependent claim 26 has been added which further defines the peripheral groove structure.

Turning to new independent claim 27, this claim corresponds to previously presented claims 13, 15 and 17 combined, and therefore calls for the peripheral groove discussed above and further for the sealing elements to be detachably fixed to the carrier sheet. It is believed that new claim 27 patentably defines over the art of record.

Dependent claims 28-38 all depend directly or indirectly from independent claim 27 and are submitted to be patentable based upon this dependence and also in their own right. For example, dependent claim 31 corresponds in subject matter to dependent claim 19 and is believed to contain the subject matter indicated by the Examiner to be allowable. Further, new dependent claim 38 sets forth the additional subject matter of the peripheral groove as set forth above in connection with claim 26.

In light of the foregoing it is submitted that the instant application is in condition for allowance and an early indication of same is respectfully requested.

An earnest and thorough attempt has been made by the undersigned to resolve the outstanding issues in this case and place same in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or feels that a telephone or personal interview would be helpful in resolving any

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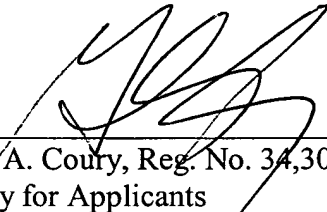
outstanding issues which remain in this application after consideration of this amendment, the Examiner is courteously invited to telephone the undersigned and the same would be gratefully appreciated.

It is submitted that the claims as amended herein patentably define over the art relied on by the Examiner and early allowance of same is courteously solicited.

It is believed that no additional fees are required in connection with this response. If any fees are required in connection with this case, it is respectfully requested that they be charged to Deposit Account No. 02-0184.

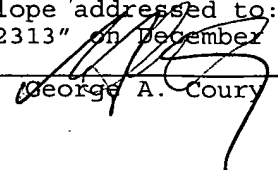
Respectfully submitted,  
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: "Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313" on December 29 2003

  
George A. Coury